MUSIC IN THE HOME

FIRST AMERICAN ORCHESTRA HAD BIRTH IN BOSTON

Of the first American orchestra, a writer in "The Etude" says:

Many of the pioneers of American music were of foreign birth, yet some of them lived so long in America and became so thoroughly identified with American music that they may almost be regarded as natives of this country. Perhaps the most important of these semi-Americans was Gottlieb Graupner, who founded the first permanent American orchestra.

Gottlieb Graupner was a Hanoverian by birth, and was for a time the oboeist in a regiment in that little German kingdom. He seems to have been a rolling stone and migrated to London, where he was a member of the large orchestra which Manager Salomon gathered together to play the new symphonies of Haydn, in 1791 and 1794. Soon after this he crossed the ocean and tried to settle in Prince Edward's Island, but found the musical field so unpromising there that he soon set out for Charleston, S. C., where there was considerable musical activity in the early days. Here he married a vocalist.

Together with his young wife, he made a new start in Boston, where there were then about six professional musicians. The rest of his life was passed in Boston, where he conformed to the necessity then laid upon all musicians and used every one of his various talents. He played contrabass, piano, clarinet, and oboe, and he taught all these instruments. He was also a music printer, and he opened a music store, where he sold the music that he himself printed and sometimes even composed.

He gathered together a number of musical amateurs (with perhaps four professionals), who formed the Philo-Harmonic Orchestra. Every Saturday night this little orchestra of about a dozen members would meet in a hall on Bedford street (it was then Pond street), and play at the symphonies of Gyrowetz or Wranitzky, or even aspire as high as the works of Haydn.

Graupner was a member of the Handel and Haydn Society, when it began its career, and in the great opening concert of that society, on Christmas Eve, 1815, his Philo-Harmonic Orchestra, of less than twelve musicians, played the orchestral parts of some choruses by Haydn and by Handel, against nearly a hundred singers, ten of whom were females. A Boston newspaper said of the concert that "there never was anything like it in the world!"—which may probably have been true, although not in the sense intended.

SOUSA'S NEW MARCH.

Lieutenant Sousa, U. S. N., on leave at his home at Port Washington, L. I., will return to his cantonment with a newly completed march to be named for the shipbuilders' drive.

D'ANNUNZIO'S SOUL IS MOVED BY FAKE NIGHTINGALE NOTES

Mascagni and D'Annunzio were bitter enemies for twenty years, during which time they hated each other as only Italians of artistic temperament can. Last year the two enemies became fast friends. D'Annunzio admitted that Mascagni was Italy's greatest musician. Mascagni proclaimed D'Annunzio Italy's greatest poet. D'Annunzio's poem "Parisina" was set to music by Mascagni.

The collaboration of the musician and the poet did not prove a great success, but nobody minded this so long as the two great men were reconciled. Their friendship, however, according to a Rome dispatch to the New York Sun, threatens to be of short duration. In fact it has cooled off considerably already; the relations between the musician and the poet are strained and an open break is said to be imminent. Mascagni is to blame, of course. He admits it himself and the only excuse he puts forward is his great sincerity. This is how it all happened.

Joke on D'Annunzio.

Mascagni wrote an article for a magazine entitled "How I Set 'Parisina' to music." He praised the poet of course and said that his verses were more musical than his, Mascagni's, notes, but then he told a story, and a funny one, too.

"D'Annunzio insisted," Mascagni wrote, "that the chief love scene of 'Parisina' should be accompanied by the singing of a nightingale. I am fifty years old. I have traveled a great deal, tried my hand at many trades and professions, married, made love, composed music, etc., but I had never heard a nightingale sing. I told D'Annunzio and he was surprised at my ignorance. He bragged that he knew the nightingale's song by heart, that he could close his eyes at any moment and hear it and that if I wanted he could describe it to me. I felt humiliated and determined to hear this bird's song and set it to music.

"At the suggestion of some friends I went to the country at night and waited long to hear the nightingale's voice. My friends had made a mistake of course and forgot that the nightingale does not sing in winter. I then decided to wait until spring, but suddenly I remembered that I was bound by contract to finish the opera before then. Finally I got a book written by a German who had patiently collected all the notes of the nightingale, but although I studied the book hard still I did not get on. The book lacked poetry.

Stuffed Nightingale.

"One day a friend came to my rescue and brought me a stuffed nightingale which had a mechanism inside it which when wound up would imitate the real bird's song. It was just what I wanted. I invited D'Annunzio to my house one evening and asked him whether he was quite sure that nightingales sang only in spring and not in winter. He answered that he was quite certain and with his usual superior air began to describe to me the wonderful song of the nightingale.

"'Wait a minute,' I said, 'you are quite wrong.' Then I opened the window overlooking the courtyard and told D'Annunzio to listen. He did and the mechanical nightingale started its warbling. My daughter, who was in the courtyard, had set it off in the nick of time.

"The poet was transfixed. His face lit up, tears came unbidden to his eyes and his poetic soul went out as it were to the bird in the courtyard. He was of course very much disappointed when I told him it was only a mechanical toy and he swore that he had suspected it all the time and and only pretended to believe it was a real nightingale to fool me."

QUAINT OLD BARREL ORGAN SOON TO BE THING OF THE PAST

"There a barrel organ caroling way
down a golden street,
In the city when the sun sinks low."

Anybody who has read that truly wonderful masterpiece of Alfred Noyes, will feel a wrench at the news that the old barrel organ, the kind that the curly-haired, black-eyed son of the south wears picturesquely slung across his shoulder is going, going just as surely as time will wear out those few that are now in existence. For, old Joseph Molinari, of New York, the last of that tribe, which is even more select than the Mohicans, has stopped his work of bringing tuneful life into the cold sides of bright brass cylinders. He has closed his little shop and with a wave of his hand and a touch of his hat, he has fled. Nobody knows where, nobody can tell where, but he has left numbers of hearts desolate.

Within a few years, all the old barrel organs with their queer little monkeys which we now occasionally hear and at which we sometimes stop and smile whimsically, will begin to wheeze and crack and sigh, and the lilting tunes of the turning crank will be no more. The sight of a monkey in a red cap capering about at the end of a chain will be obsolete and the species will lose its glamour for us. For a monkey without a grinder and an organ, and a barrel organ at that, has as much right to be seen and enjoyed as Punch without his affectionate Judy.

It is true we shall still have with us the big piano organs which are pulled around on wheels but they are as much a part of the adventuresome life of a strolling troubadour as an automobile is a part of a caravan in the desert of Sahara.

"ENGLISH AS SHE IS WROTE"—BY SINGERS

At the time they were producing Damrosch's "Cyrano" I told you how Amato learned his part in English by having some one read it to him while he copied it down as the sounds would be in Italian. I see by the papers that our friend Caruso has been mastering "The Star-Spangled Banner" in the same way, and this is what he wrote down:

"O seiken iu sie bai dhi dons erli lait
Wat so praudi ui heild at dhi tuuilaits last glimnin?"

You never would think that this was Caruso's way of "reporting":

"Oh! say can you see
By the dawn's early light,
What so proudly we hailed
At the twilight's last gleaming?"

The New York Times publishes the facsimile of Caruso's original, to show how he learned it.

Do not, however, get the idea that Caruso does not understand English, or speak it well. But that is the way the artists have to learn it, so as to get what they hope will be "the correct pronunciation."—"Mephisto" in Musical America.

WILL PARADE PARIS SINGING LA MARSEILLAISE

A pleasant surprise is in store for the French when American troops parade the Champs Elysees singing "La Marseillaise" with almost as much fervor and in almost as good French as the Parisian would himself.

This, said Henri Beaugard, Young Men's Christian Association song leader for the Washington war work district, is what he is hoping to do with the American's soldier's voice.

"One thing our civilian population can do to help along the spirit and the morale of our army; that is, learn to sing the songs our men are singing," said Beaugard.

"Singing is the one sure cure for the grouch. Mine is an interesting work, and I am glad I am to have a part in helping to make a singing army out of the American forces going to France," he said.

Mr. Beaugard addressed the Arts Club about his work Sunday. He was scheduled to give four songs, but encores were demanded until he had sung sixteen.

OUR NATIONAL HYMN SUNG IN SPANISH

Some where in New York there is a little church whose one peculiar charm is a congregation of some twenty-five Spanish speaking people—Cubans, South Americans, Central Americans, and Spaniards—who gather every Sunday to worship in their own way, which is individual, and in their tongue, which is charming.

After the benediction of the priest, a vested chorister, accompanied by two diminutive assistants, solemnly and ceremoniously brings in an American flag. This is held high up where all can see it, and out of the throats of twenty-five or more Spanish speaking foreigners rise the notes of "America." But instead of the familiar "My Country, 'tis of thee" come words of softer accent and stranger sound. For instead of singing in English this tiny congregation sings our hymn in the language which has meaning to them. At the end of the song the flag is carried out at the head of the recessional. This marks the close of the service.

SPAIN AND ITALY EACH CLAIM TO HAVE HOLY GRAIL

Now that the whole opera world stands in the sign of "Parsifal," and hence the sign of the Grail, the question again has been raised, Where is the genuine Grail? The Italians claim that it is the emeraldlike Oriental glass vessel that belongs to the treasures of the Cathedral of Genoa. The Spaniards, however, maintain that it belongs to them, having been in the Cathedral of Valencia for nearly 500 years, since 1428. The Journal des Debats is quoted by the Musical Standard as giving the following details:

It is a hemispherical vessel, seven inches high, of an Oriental agate, the chief color of which is emerald, but which, according to the light, varies to purple. The Grail was a present of Alfonso V the Magnanimous, King of Aragon; and one of his predecessors, Martin, is said to have received the precious cup thirty years before from the monks of the cloister of San Juan de la Pena, who had it in their keeping. The Latin document presenting it is dated September 26, 1399, and declares expressly that it is "that chalice which our Lord Jesus Christ hallowed at the Last Supper with His precious blood."

The legend claims that this cup of the Grail was brought to Huesca by St. Lorenzo, the deacon of Pope Sixtus, at the time of the Valentinian persecutions. In order that it might not be desecrated on the approach of the Arabs, the Spaniards are said to have taken it to San Juan de la Pena, the inaccessible fortified monastery in the wildest part of the Pyrenees of Aragon. In this monastery, where the kings of Navarre were buried and the Crusaders were dedicated, and where many Christians sought refuge from the persecutions of the heathen, the Grail is said to have been used at the mass.

AMERICAN BARITONE LAUDS CHARLIE CHAPLIN

Hugh Allan, the American baritone, has returned to New York from a successful concert tour to the Pacific coast, which was temporarily interrupted in Los Angeles by an operation, which his surgeons found it necessary to perform upon his left foot.

Mr. Allan visited San Francisco, Los Angeles and San Diego, and was feted at the Panama-California Exposition at the latter city. While in Southern California he met Charlie Chaplin, the motion-picture comedian, whom he has known for many years. He declared Chaplin to be the diametrical opposite in intellectual make-up from the inane characters he represents on the screen.

"Chaplin is a man of the broadest education, of marked refinement in taste and of keen discrimination in music, in which he manifests a lively and very intelligent interest," said Mr. Allan. "He showed much interest in my work. I was struck with his comments and inquiries in regard to the latest instrumental works of Strauss and Schonberg, particularly the 'Alpine' Symphony of the former."

BLIND GIRL LEARNS MUSIC BY USE OF PERFORATED PAPER

BOSTON, March 14.—Boston possesses a musical marvel in the person of Odie Burke, a charming and gifted young woman who has been afflicted with blindness since her sixth year.

In talents, in intelligence, in appearance, in manner, Miss Burke is far above the average girl of her age, facts which, in view of her great handicap, bespeak a lofty nature.

Miss Burke has always shown marked musical ability, "though you must not think," says she, "that a person who can't see is just naturally blest with superfine perceptions. The keenness of my memory, the senses of touch and hearing are matters of concentration and development."

This young artist writes and reads music by means of what is known as the Braille system which she learned while at school in the Perkins Institute of Boston.

Equipped with a little piece of perforated steel, a sheet of paper, and a sort of small stiletto, she takes down all her pieces by dictation. Then running her finger tips lightly over the perforated paper, she plays with the right hand the melody as she has recorded it. Once or twice is enough to fix it in her memory and her knowledge of music is such that she can then readily supply the other parts according to the character of the melody.

Miss Burke is a good pianist and has composed some pleasing songs and things for violin, but it is as a violinist that she has elected to take her place in professional life. Already she has had much popular success in vaudeville throughout New England, but she has now returned to serious study under Vaughn Hamilton of the New England Conservatory. To her teacher she is a source of deep interest. "With her wonderful memory, her fine left hand and her good ear," he claims, "she should do big things one day."